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Echoes from Egypt
and
Other Poems

VAN B. SULLINS



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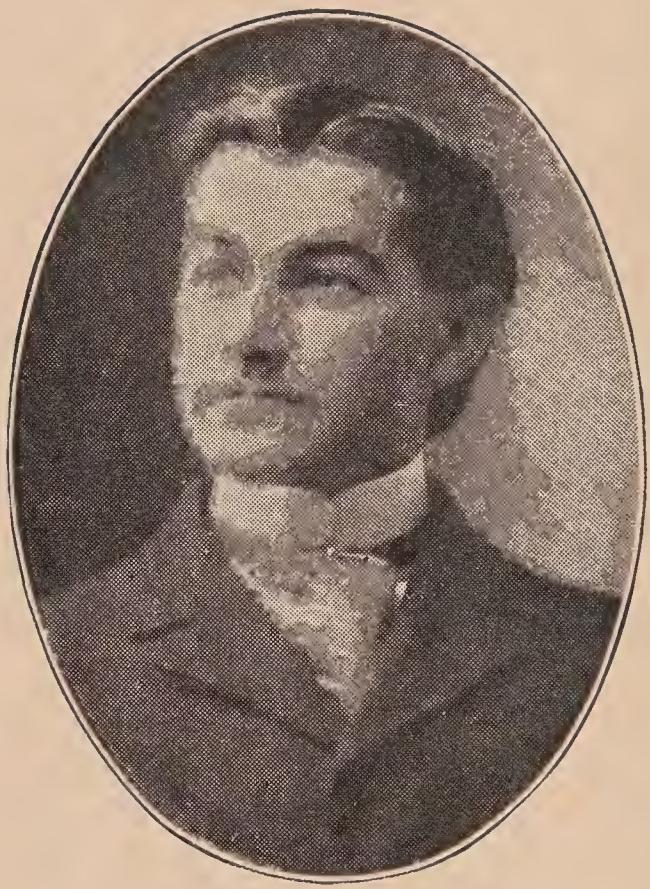
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VAN B. SULLINS

FOREWORD

This volume contains a collection of miscellaneous poems covering a period of about twenty years. The title, "Echoes from Egypt" derives its name from Southern Illinois, popularly known as "Egypt." This is the home of the author and most of the poems were written here.

V. B. S.

Price \$1.00

Echoes from Egypt

OLD EGYPT

Old Egypt, you are growing young,
Time was when you were grey.
I knew you when your head was hung,
And thought I heard your swan song sung,
But you have faced about and swung
Into a better day.

Old Egypt, can you tell me why
You look so youthful now?
I'll read in secret your reply
And seal it up as prophecy,
And to the future wink an eye,
If you'll allow.

Old Egypt slowly raised his head,
And smiling as he spoke:
"In days of ignorance I was dead,
My barren hillsides all were bled.
But Science and I have lately wed
And wear the yoke."

Old Egypt, now I understand,
I'm jilted, eh? Well! Well!
For one sweet song I sold my land
Where now the blooming orchards stand
Decked like a bride, who waves her hand
To me, farewell.

So Egypt joined Horticultural Hope.
The good stars all met soon
Within her circled Horoscope,
When she from sleeping bondage woke
And marched up wisdom's shining slope
To Canaan's boon.

BURNSIDE

Fair city, first on memory's page,
Last in my thought when slow, declining age
Bids backward look to childhood's dream,
Where fadeless scenes arise, revive and stream
Like rushing rivers toward some sea unknown
To mix and mingle with its watery foam.

There first of sorrow, first of joy I knew ;
There brothers three and sister one all grew
To youth's rough rim. There sorrow broke
The fireside circle—Death's cruel stroke
Struck mother fair. God's chariot swung
Down low, bore up, while angels sung
A song unheard before to mortal ear,
Half filled with hope and half with fear.

Westward lies a hill and summit crowned,
The marble ghosts mark many a mound
Where mothers, fathers, sons and daughters sleep
In undisturbed quiet; while onward sweep
Surviving sons, till one by one they fall
To join the ranks, embraced at last by all.

One day I walked among these stones,
Where lie long since the buried bones
Of Burnside boys—my chums of yore,
Ben, Edward, Willie—ah, many more.
And do you think no tear I shed
O'er these past playmates lying dead?

But let me turn my troubled eye
Toward rosier realms where pleasures lie ;
The old pond where we used to swim,
The rope swing swung from shady limb ;
The old brick school, the sloping hill,
The hedge, the ball ground, running rill,
The battle ground near the old mill ;
The orchard, Dupont's pond and field,
Such dear delights all these did yield.

And those fair maidens, where are they ?
Jessie, Clara, Minnie, Mae,
Chums in childhood, courtship, and play.
At church our sweethearts held our hat,
Alas I see no more of that.
We'd serenade on moonlight eve,
And mystic lovewebs softly weave.

The sum of every scene endears,
As upward through the growing years
I try to climb with feeble feet
To manhood's height ; perchance to meet
Success, misfortune, or midway pause
'Twixt both, where nature's lenient laws
Most kindness show when neither draws.

But be life's march now slow or swift,
The mind is always free to drift
To that sure spot and pleasure's port,
Shot through with wildest, youthful sport ;
Where most of joy and least of woe
Are felt ; where future shadows never throw
Their dark wing 'cross youth's sunny zone
Nor gall today's glad hour with tomorrow's groan.

As needle-like time turns to magnet pole,
So turns my mind ; points to the golden goal,
Beholds thee, dear Burnside, with memory's steady gaze,
As through the world I walk with winding ways.

MARION

Egypt's giant city, strong and tall and straight,
Eye with vision vast, huge and kind of heart,
Born on granite base, proud and justly great,
Pyramid of power, our chief commercial mart ;
Moving swiftly forward, always business bent,
Fine the streak of honor through each sinew sent !

Native iron is there, zeal and push and power,
All unite as one the web of wealth to weave,
Nor have you ever lost the lessons of the hour,
The fathers to their sons so nobly didst bequeath ;
You from the center grew—grew outward toward the
rim,
Like fiber'd forest oak with strong and stately limb.

Yes, rich red blood is here from generations old,
From sturdy stock you sprung. The early pioneer
Put in your vein the vim, cast a mighty mold,
Carved you from solid stone and called you Egypt's peer.
This is the morning, Marion, the morning of your prime,
The zenith is yet distant, let all your chariots climb.

OLD GOLCONDA

Old Golconda, quaint, early founded,
Rural—rustic to the core.
By her yellow hills surrounded,
Cuddled on a flattened floor,
Resting in a rut, rust bounded,
Such a compact, curious city
She takes pride in being poor.
Sister cities pour their pity
'Gainst her closed, age-rusted door,
But old Golconda shakes her fist,
And sure shows fight when she ain't kissed.

Poor old Pope, the state's tail-end'er,
Two streaks of rust for railroad spur.
Few the folks left to defend her
As she dwindleth year by year,
Struggling on her stem so slender.
Still she has her "hounds" and "possums,"
"Pumpkin rings on pegs"—so queer!
Old time hollyhock still blossoms,
Feeble Fords all out of gear.
But soft! don't whisper "out of date"!
Unless you're fixed for any fate.

METROPOLIS

Where the broad Ohio flows,
 Sits our city queen,
Bower'd 'neath the reddest rose
 E'er in "Egypt" seen.
Here the mild magnolia grows,
Here the southwind softly blows,
And sweet nature best bestows
 Lavish laurels, growing green,
 O'er the city's silent scene.
Egypt's best blood courts thy hand,
Woos thy favor, waits thy call,
Ready at thy feet to fall,
Bound by love's bright golden band,
And build a home in fairy land.

CAIRO

Two mighty rivers with widening bulge and turn
Swerve Southward, bordering Egypt's Urn.
They meet, embrace, and kiss—fine waters blend
In one broad stream, to mark old Egypt's end.
 And jewel'd 'tween these modern Niles,
 Old Cairo lifts her head and smiles.
Half north, half south, but best of both
Meet here, shake hands, pledge common troth.
Here southland beauties banquet free
Within the grand "Old Halliday."
Here business booms, boats come and go,
Wharfs gorged with wares. Shrill whistles blow.
First City, fair, strong, potent, great,
Here Egypt's roads all terminate.

LOVEJOY MONUMENT

What mean these stones, snow towering stones,
That climb toward the sky?
Can they give breath, revive the bones
That now beneath them lie?
Can monument so massive quite express
The sacrifice, the service, the distress?

And on the pinnacle lightly poised
With pinions wide and trump in hand,
The Angel-Herald a silence noised,
And Nations caught the mute command.
Or that command was conscience born
In one man's heart, amid the storm.

And as shall pass succeeding years,
And friends, as we, come with their flowers,
May they pay tribute with their tears,
As we today have done with ours.
And may these silent stones still say
Tomorrow what they do today.

HERRIN (Tipperary)

It's a long, long way down to Herrin,
It's a long way to go.
It's a long, long way down to Herrin,
The bloodiest place I know.
Farewell Law and Order,
Welcome Rock and Rye.
It's a long, long way down to Herrin,
Where the bloomin' bullets fly.

It's a long, long way down to Herrin,
It's a long way to go.
It's a long, long way down to Herrin,
Where the "Hootch" and "Honkies" grow.
Look out for loose "tin lizzies,"
For they're thick as bees in a hive.
If you once pass through old Herrin
Thank the good Lord you're still alive.

PARKER CITY

Who has not heard of Parker City,
Nestled 'neath her rugged hills?

Nature smiles and winks quite witty,
As from lavish hands she spills
Every springtime ferns and flowers,
Shady nooks and leafy bowers,
For you'll waste so many hours
Waiting there for the "Big Four,"
Waiting—waiting—nothing more,
At Parker.

Once I knew a "Cairo Drummer,"
Who spent many a weary week
Down at Parker every summer,
Fishing in "Old Sugar Creek."
Said this old knight of the grip,
As he spoke with lowered lip,
"I've lost six hours every trip."
But smiling, added with a jest,
"Fine old place to fish and rest,
At Parker."

CHURCH TO BE SOLD

"A Church to be sold," thus cries the Evening Press.
Could colder blasts than these strike clear
Into a city's heart so prosperous?
When on the eve of this eventful year
 Thanksgiving praise will fill the air,
 And gratitude shall be our prayer.

Shall God's own goods depreciate, shall they decline
Where wealth denies no luxury to its own?
Shall future generations upon these hills enshrine
A monument to our ungrateful hearts of stone?
 Where are the Fathers now; the city's pride?
 Will they step in, or will they stand aside?

Once I was pastor of this Church. The flock was poor.
I saw the struggle then, unequal was the strain.
I saw the pressure there, which steady patience bore,
Persist unflinchingly when every hope was slain.
 I saw the rising tide increase and surge and sway
 Until God's little church was almost swept away.

Now wounded by the way, helpless and half dead;
For many a Priest and Levite has passed by,
With other pressing interests just on ahead,
While thou, alone and helpless, art left to die.
 Some good Samaritan will yet perchance arrive,
 And with the wine of gladness thy bleeding wounds
 revive.

IN MEMORIAM

The sad house shut the banquet hall,
No "Merry Christmas" there.
A picture hung upon the wall,
O, he was young and fair,
Grey robes are doffed for the black,
And sadness settles like a pall,
No soldier boy is back,
A "Christmas Gift" but to recall,
That death is on our track.
A gift of grief, life's bitter gall,
To teach us of our lack.
Yes, teach us how to bow the head,
And how the knee to bend.
Our Christmas was not "White" but "Red."
O trouble ties a tangled thread,
And who can know the end?
But since our Harry's spirit fled,
God seems a nearer Friend.
Though green the grave and grey the stone,
Where lies his spirit quiet,
We think we hear from Heaven's throne
A voice that calls tonight.
And though our hearts are sad and lone,
We see one gleam of light,
And when the years have come and gone,
We'll plume our wings for flight,
And quit the land of grief and groan,
To meet on Heaven's height.

Miscellaneous Poems

THE INNER LIFE

Life's little day her measured circle makes,
O'er well grooved lines and curve conventional.
No tangent turns aside, or tarries in its course
The once and well fixed purpose there
Which Providence hath planted.
Unlike the sea, whose surface smooth or rough
Is made by winds external, my soul from inner centres
Doth send forth those elements which photograph
My features foul or fair.
True to my inward life,
The full expulsive force of love is felt.
And thus my soul on double dealing bent before,
Is now divorced.
Where love is all-enthroned, no lines of evil linger.
Why should that tenant tarry long,
Who seeks my house to ruin?

Thus to my quiet unfeathered couch,
Alone I lay me down and sleep,
While those white winged watchers of my soul
Their all night vigil keep, until the dream of night
Is ended by the dawn.

MENTAL MOODS

Sweet fell autumnal showers and softly glowed
The ruddy rim of evening in the West.
The sun, her spokelike streamers gently throwed
A golden ladder from one Celestial crest.
On these my thoughts ascend perchance to learn
Of God's design and cause and chief concern.

Design was God's first flower, ere the fall
Was felt in Eden's bower, ere the shame
From Eve to Adam passed, ere the call
"Where art thou, Adam?" earthward came
Like thunder from a cruel frowning sky,
Which broke the spell of earth's sweet harmony.

Before chastisement ceased Jehovah spoke:
"The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head."
The Manger caught the echo, Christ awoke,
And forty centuries now had quickly sped.
From Adam down to Noah down to Christ,
The Clock of Ages slowly had struck twice.

That Star of Hope remains, so doth the night
Of sin's dominion, Satan's vaunted sway.
Unequal is the strife though hard the fight
"Twixt powers poor, composed of human clay
And sprinkled sparks of deity in man
Who wills the right and seeks the heights to scan.

Two perfect things: my purpose and Thy plan.
The first has failed, the second still remains,
The one revives, I rise and say "I can,"
Today it dies, I watch it as it wanes.
The spark, inclined to fire, though flickered fast
Into a feeble flame and died at last.

I fell, the loss was fatal for an hour,
But grief and groan were oil to the wound
Which quickly healed; 'twas nature's ready dower
Pour'd in; God for a moment frowned,
While all around, above, below, was felt
A sense of cruel horror, crime and guilt.

Today my better self desired to speak,
Speak on, I said, thou temporary guest.
Before me mountains rose, and peak by peak
I scaled them all in eager, anxious quest,
Until my jaded limbs refused to go,
My footing slipt, I fell to base below.

I view'd the mountain's crest from where I lay,
The distance I had dared, the rocky steep,
The valley at my side so silently,
Then cooling spirits came and soothed to sleep.
"Tomorrow thou shalt rise" a whisper sighed,
I caught the margin of that echo as it died.

"Tomorrow I shall rise," why not today?
Shall future strength from present weakness rise?
Why prostrate on the earth I chafing lay?
I sat and sighed and saw those destinies
To which my soul aspired but could not climb,
Though weakness wore a look somewhat sublime.

I sink, I rise, I sink, I rise no more,
'Til better wings support me in my flight.
Who wearing leaden weights attempts to soar?
Yet dreams he of that golden giddy height
To which his soul ascends, a transient trip,
To touch the throne and taste some nectar'd lip.

Poor soul, like to some cold sequester'd stone
That rears its ghostlike figure toward the sky,
While all around its base a desert moan
Of silent lamentation seems to sigh
For that which was or what might hope to be,
And fire the taste of cold tranquillity.

For such a soul and such a soil as this
Can not create devotion, cause desire
To spread her pinions, crave the wonted bliss
To which all natures normal should aspire.
If bleak the earth below or brass the sky,
What profits upward look or earthward cry?

Desire is dual yet the deed is stayed,
Though leans it heavy to the lower side.
Fear forces this abeyance—I'm afraid
To float upon the flood's relentless tide,
For yonder is the rock and shallow shore
Whereon my bark may break or stranded moor.

But why desire the wrong and yet refrain
To do the deed thus prompted by the mind?
Why curse I what I crave? why such disdain
Toward that I love and long and am inclined?
I can not fall a brute, or rise a perfect man,
God equipoised my efforts in His plan.

'Twas noble effort though effect be poor,
But better poor effect than lame desire.
What though I fall? did I attempt to soar?
Who sinks in mud may also see a star,
And by its gleam may grope on toward the light
That dawns eternal and drives back the night.

I have a spark within, it troubles deep,
Too cold to comfort me, too small to flame.
I touch it and am scorch't; I wounded weep,
Then follow days of groaning, weeks of pain—
Stern pleaders for the clemency delayed,
Until the utmost farthing has been paid.

I saw the swine with satisfying grunt,
Repose within his palace made of mire.
No spark to spoil, unconscious of affront,
And lives he undisturbed by desire.
“Exchange!” I said, but something pulled within,
Denied the barter, branded such as sin.

Why mutilate the mind, the body wreck,
Distort the vision, demonize the soul?
Encourage vilest dreams no course can check
’Til they, in headlong fury, reach the goal,
And circling round the pit whose slippery brink
Receives them full devouring as they sink?

Today the mind is clear, the soul is clean,
My better self is smiling sweet and fair.
The cheer of life is buoyant, brisk, serene,
The breath of many summers fill the air.
Cleared is the sky of every rift and cloud,
While sunshine bathes the spirit, makes it proud.

BIRDIE

Hop along on lightsome wing.

Birdie did you ever sing
Of a love you did not know?

Men do so.

I have heard you from the tree,
In the bush and near the sea,
You always seem the same to me,
Where'er I go.

Hop along and to your nest,
Night is nigh, sweet be your rest.
Not so mine.

For, my burdens brought to bed,
Troop-like legions fill my head,
Trouble ties a tangled thread
That won't unwind.

Birdie, when the night is spent,
And the morn its light hath lent,
You will sing.

Sweet will be each nimble note
That swells in thy golden throat,
And upon the air doth float
With clear ring.

Birdie, God doth thus allow
That I am far more than thou,
Yet I'm barred
That poor boon the night has brought,
To thy soft breast all unsought,
Yours are battles all unfought,
Mine are hard.

OTHERS

I craved a car, a flivver first,
Second a sedan,
Then a limousine came last.
Three times my dream was cast
Before the bubble burst.
To wean the wish or win
Thus thought I: what barriers ban?
The cost of either, all or each
Is quite beyond my reach;
While thousands toiling dare not dream as I,
Who hug the living line. These scarce aspire
Beyond life's common need. I caught their cry,
It cooled somewhat my own desire
For pleasur'd realms. But quenched fire
Warmed not my brother's want or gave increase
To his success or purchased peace
For me. I sought physician, remedies
For two lone losers needing light.
So I concluded in my plight:
If I relax in noble quest,
My brother in his realm of rest,
Poor progress makes, while neither gains
Except by struggle, toil and pains.
Who helps his brother, halts not his pace
In progress, pleasure—any honor'd goal.
My gain means measur'd strength to all the race—
Body, mind, and soul.

GROWTH

The Lily so pure, so wholesome, so white,
Did not grow in the Garden of God,
Did not lift its bright head in that land of light,
But from the deep dungeon of dark miry night
It gradually grew to majesty and might,
And wove its white robe from the earth's black clod.

UNSEEN

See you that lily in the mire?
God's push is all unseen.
It seems to grow and never tire,
While I, with life so lean,
Must struggle with my base desire,
And cry at last "unclean."

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more and exceeding weight of glory."—II Cor. 4:17.

"Light affliction" my suffering small must seem
When from Eternity's view
I reckon with it. A "moment's" dream.
My Creed declares this true,
But Crudeness cuts the beam
Which sought an opening through
Into the soul's dark centre and renew
My flagging spirits with its stream.

That "Weight of Glory" strange paradox we say.
For weight is wingless, glory flies.
No—I did think so today,
But that thought dies.
I've later learned another way.
Weight, aloft, looks up into the skies,
And with the wings of song and hope will rise.
Earth keeps her part the clay.

"THAT HURTS TO THE QUICK"

"That hurts to the quick," said Johnny Green,
As he longingly turned away
From a thick plate glass in a down town store,
On a cold bleak wintry day.

I had caught the the phrase while passing by,
And had wondered what it could mean,
For other boys had passed by too,
But none spoke like Johnny Green.

So I turned and retraced my steps to see
What it was that had caused him to say,
He "was hurt to the quick" at something seen
In the window's gilded array.

A thousand diamonds burst on my sight!
And my own soul longed for a gem,
Then I understood what had touched to the quick,
Now it touched me as well as him.

Just so today we're touched to the quick
By many a thing we see,
But there's always some glass plate between,
Which bars it from you and me.

When we look and linger and long for a gem,
'Tis a feeling that hope oft inspires,
For thousands pass by no gems to see,
Nor to feel such kindred desires.

For the thing that touches us to the quick
Is a spur, if only applied
To push us from the pavement where we watched
To possess what is on the inside.

NOT NOW, JUST WAIT

On a rusty nail o'er a cheerless grate,
An empty stocking was hung.
Then little Jim, in a garret dim,
To a corner crept, and all night slept
On a cot so cold. 'Twas late
That night the angels sung
A song in a dream to him,
And said, "Not now, just wait!"

"Not now, just wait!" Doth this declare
That the angels mock at his mirth?
Will his dream that night at morn bring blight?
Will the angel choir be a dirge to desire
Which the dawn will turn to despair?
Jim awoke and arose from his berth—
One peep turned life's pivot toward night,
For the stocking still hopeless hung there.

"Not now, just wait!" Our present boon.
Earth's grate with ashes is gray.
Like the empty hose, the world with woes,
O'erhangs the heart of a nation's mart
When Greed cuts the cord too soon
Of childhood's hope. Thus dwarfs away
Ambition's dream; and in throttled throes
Life's morning dies ere noon.

"Not now, just wait!" On the willow is hung
Some harp with tuneless string.
So soon the heart may lose its art,
And the deft hand drop like a palsied prop
'Neath the towering task; the tongue,
In its silence refuse to sing
'Til through the desert of the heart
The streams of God flow fresh and young.

CARUSO

He is gone. Mute the lyre
Stands with slackened string.
Cold the clay where once the fire
Warmed his soul to sing,
Burnt our base and low desire,
Lent each wish a wing.

Gone—far gone that lustrous eye,
With its soulful gaze.
And a weeping world asks "why?"
While the shadow plays,
And the Western sea runs high,
Rolling restless waves.

Gone! On that sea his bark is tossed,
Like a speck it seems.
Sinks now from sight—all is lost!
No—bright her banner gleams.
The harbor's near, the sea is crossed,
Our singer wakes from dreams.

Look! the sea has ceased to surge,
Now the light shines through.
Lo, he sings—no, not a dirge,
But a song that's "new."
Music with a mystic "urge,"
Meant for me and you.

THE NEW YEAR

(Paul Goodsell Sullins)

Let strife die out and peace be born,
Another year has come at last.
With brighter hope we meet new days
And banish from our thoughts the past.

Resounding on the clear-toned air,
With rising, falling, vibrant swells,
That come and warm and cheer our hearts,
Ring on, O glorious New Year bells!

Let us erase the lines and blurs
That mark and mar our old life page,
And with a sheet all white and clean
Begin to live another age.

The mist, receding in the past,
The future leaves in promise clear;
The visions of the other days
Will fade and melt with this New Year.

O bards! sing on in hopeful joy
Of days and hours yet to be;
Foretell to all the waiting world
Some golden opportunity.

And let us ever forward look,
For life is short and time is long,
And let us welcome one and all
The music of the New Year song.

SOUL'S SONG

Sing soul! slack strings be vibrant yet.
I'll turn the key that tunes; the bow I'll bend.
This deadly rest, this silence should beget
In thee the Siren's lure; with love's lost plaintive blend.
Let music wild and strange bring baseness to an end
And stir those sluggish streams to silver jet,
That vein the soul's interior with venom violet.

TO JENNIE

Behind some distant veil unseen,
For which the future holds a key,
There, infant-like lies calm, serene,
Unknown treasures, more to me
Than brief acquaintance can esteem,
Or conjured words bear prophecy.

TO ROSE

Sweet wedlock where thy flower didst bloom,
A thorny bush grew too;
But 'neath those petals fair and white,
The thorn was hid from view.
The stalwart stem began to droop;
The flower began to fade,
And then the thorn disclosed to all
The wound which it had made.
O beauteous life so fair and white,
Beneath thy image lies
Temptation's sting to curse and blight
Each flower of paradise.

THE COMET

Comet, early in the morn I saw thee.
For close against the eastern sky,
Thy fleece-like form majestic stood,
With flowing robes of fire.
Upon thy course, like to a lasso's loop elliptical,
For four-score years almost thy flight
With swiftest speed was run;
And yet God's scheduled time no small delay,
Or accident records.

But when the Century's Circle
Three quarter years cuts off again,
I'll not be here thy form to view
Or note thy periodic visit.

The Sages, who for centuries past
Thine ancient form have viewed,
Say that thy body lesser grows
When perihelion height is reached ;
And thence receding from the sun,
Expands to normal size again.
In this transgressor of the physic law,
But true to law divine.

Just so my soul from Thee Thou Greater Sun,
Its wandering way through coastless sea of space,
Didst journey take afar ;
And on its nourished vanity,
Didst barren grow the while,
And greater bulk assumed.
But ere thy course was spent a sweet return began,
And toward that Source of Light,
With hopeful spirits hurried.

That Light approached more radiant shewn,
And heat intenser grew.
These baser sorts of self began to melt,
Until within thy sight the smallest speck they seemed.
But size is naught.
'Tis but the loss of that which brings a better life.
For now upon my soul is imaged fair
The stamp of quality divine.

FLIGHT OF THE SOUL

Then up with my soul to the summit,
To the apex of yonder's bright height ;
Be still, be steady a moment,
Then poise for thy furthermost flight.
The regions below thee are dismal,
Wet not thy fair wing by descent,
But breathe from thy portal eternal,
Then mount the unknown firmament.
O no not lost in these regions,
For here is the home of the soul,
Surrounded by Planets in legions,
And far from the Earth's control.
Here is room for the spread of thy pinions
Unhindered by gross things or gay ;
Where the space of Celestial dominions,
Makes room for thy swift soaring way.
O soul quick hasten thy flight,
Pass Pleiades, Neptune and Mars,
Dip not to the left or the right,
Keep straight in the course of the stars.

LINCOLN THE MELANCHOLY MAN

So rich with rustic life yet never rude,
He loved the crowd, though twilight solitude
Stole through his fiber'd frame 'til nature's night
Stood still a moment. None dare intrude.
Hushed was the world and strangely quiet
That melancholy mood.

Like some lone planet, lustreless and lost,
He stood. No star 'mong heaven's shining host,
No meteor's flash announced the distant dawn.
O'er midnight's murky meadow no line of light has
crossed.

But shadows, deep dark shadows, a mighty veil has drawn
To shield a mind engrossed.

Like mellow moonlight on some sluggish stream,
A quavering smile arose—mild prophet of the dream
That wakes the day and o'er the troubled night
Throws golden sunlight beam on beam,
'Til dark and devious spirits speed their flight,
And leave the soul serene.

THE DYING YEAR

Let the old year die, check not her waning breath,
She has struggled with us long, peaceful be her death.
Clasp her hand and feel it tremble,
See the snow upon her head
Rob the rose of all its red,
While the pearly beads assemble,
Kiss the cheek to coldness dead.

Leave to the world no honor, she needs not know thy
praise;
The welcome paths that men may point will shorten
human ways.

With all thine ancient kin, go sleep,
We know not of thy sepulcher;
Nor to thy tombless 'bode draw near,
Lest newborn woe befall us, and we'd weep
To see our own hopes disappear.

Come with trophies and with tributes, strew them on her
bier;

Look upon those pallid features, shed on them a tear.

Fold those hands and draw the curtain,
Shield her eyes from light.

Death is done! No more such blight
Will bend thy form, or leave uncertain
Longings in thy breast to fight.

Tread now softly through the chamber, speak in whispered
tones.

Death and Silence—they are sisters, and these many
moans

Are the messengers of morning
To announce at break of day
That the old is laid away,
And the New, itself adorning,
Turns our back on yesterday.

BIT

O the bite of a dog brought sorrow
As well as a painful sore,

For I met my friend on the morrow
And he proved my friend no more.

Now I bear the bite of the beast
As well as the loss of my friend.

But the dog—the dog, well he's deceased,

And that should have been the end.

Now all three got hurt—man, dog, and I,

And I'm sorrowing without a hope,

For I buried the dog in a ditch near by,

When he should have sold for soap.

Sure there's a balm for every bite
If we'd wait for the thing to turn up.

But poor is the pay when we strike from spite,
Whether aimed at a man or pup.

WHEN I LOOK IN THE GLASS

When I look in the glass,
Alas ! Alas !
For the chill of the future I see,
And the years of youth will no more pass
With the years that are to be,
Nor will tomorrow's flame surpass
The fire of yesterday.
When I look in the glass,
Alas ! Alas !
For the gray hairs match the black ;
Soon all will be a snowy mass,
For Time trails on our track,
And the beaten path shows growing grass
As the dim eye glances back.
When I look in the glass,
Alas ! O no !
For my horoscope has a star.
From the dark cloud slants a golden glow,
And its light shines from afar,
And I trail to the top from the earth below
Where a gate stands wide ajar.

PLATO

Three score years ago thou, Plato,
Wast cradled into life by scarce a score of men
Who, like their pilgrim fathers, didst embark,
And on another shore, from caste and sovereign free,
Dropt thy first seed of freedom's flower.
The germ began to grow.
The tiny slender stem its noiseless skyward way
Ascended through many a calloused clod of scorn and
criticism,
Until today beneath thy spreading branches sits
In sweet repose the learning of the ages ;
While on thy pendent bough the golden luscious fruit of
genius
Still is clinging.

Plato, the years grow old and die ;
Thy noble sons do perish one by one and pass away.
But on thy brow the sunshine of sixty summers lingers
still,
While o'er thy distant pathway no trailing clouds of twi-
light fall
To dim thy radiant past.

So may thy strength endure.
And with succeeding years to come
May many a polished Platonian son become a setting
stone
In that monumental tower which "Wisdom's Way" hath
built.

Delivered on the sixtieth anniversary of the PLATONIAN literary society of McKendree College, Lebanon, Illinois,

WINDING STREAMS

It noses the mountain,
Nods in the mead,
Each eddy a fountain,
With foaming-white head.

Winding it wiggles,
Gliding it giggles,
The stream and its song,
Are never quite dead.

The river it reaches,
Nor tired from the trip.
The tribute it teaches
Is still on the lip.
“Detour,” “Deviation,”
“Arrive with Elation,”
The journey was long,
Now rest “just a bit.”

A WILD WISH

I was wild and wished a change,
That would the past efface ;
Give to the future wider range
Or add some mystic grace ;
Strike deep a new note sad or strange,
That would the old displace.

DEBT

As we behold the maddened rush for money today,
And see the goddess of Chastity and Purity pushed aside,
Let us count the cost of the moral debt we owe to the
world,
And fling ourselves into the fray.

Thus the retrospect of life at evening's close,
Will cherish to herself some sweet content
For life's brief day of useful toil;
And things that count but little with the world,
To her, as rich rewards, will be revealed.

If wealth comes not with the passing years ;
If honor, fame, renown no blossoms bloom ;
If labors spent reveal but sparing gains,
Or morning's dream reach not her sunny noon,
Then may the eyes of my illumination not be dimmed
By such dark-winged shadows here,
Nor life her fragmentary deeds disdain ;
But with exalted hope and faithful tread,
Pursue the middle course of life's highway,
And fall down at the foot among the ranks,
Where lies the dust crowned multitude.

LOST LOVES

I've lost my love for little things,
Time turns to vision vast.
The simple song that childhood sings,
Will move no more nor clasp
Its tiny tendrils round a heart
All withered by old Wisdom's art.

Time was I listened by the hour
To twittering bird and cricket's cry,
And valued much the mystic power
That each had served as soul supply.
I know my former friends are near,
But drowsy Nature dulls my ear.

BETTER BABIES

Better Babies, yes but why not more in number?
Do you hear words discussed about the quantity?
Thus speaks the modern maid: "Do not the house en-
cumber,"
"One, two, O well the limit should be three."
And some old maid will grunt when you suggest but
"one."
While married dears (some there are) prefer to make
it "none."
Yes, Better Babies, sure! but why not half a score?
To run and romp and climb, to feed and play and fight?
The nation's wealth today can trace to days of yore,
And point to men on fortune's crowning height,
As sixth or seventh son from one fine family tree,
Where "single sprouts" dried up in sad obscurity.

ASPIRATION

O for a tongue to sing Thy praise,
A heart to feel Thy love;
A will to guide in heavenly ways,
A hope that points above.

O for an eye both strong and pure,
That sees both near and far;
A soul that can resist, endure,
Though marked by many a scar.

Lord let me from all depths arise
To where the sky is clear;
To those immortal destinies,
My soul has long craved here.

EARLY DAYS

O they are gone and all too soon,
The years that followed were less dear.
And hope full orb'd at early noon,
Has shrunk through each succeeding year.
And love that laughed with ease in June
Lies cold on bleak December bier.

LINCOLN THE LOVER

Flow on sweet Sangamon, gently flow,
By hamlet, hill and plain,
Through fertile fields of growing grain,
Where wildest woodlawn flowers grow.
Thy shipless wave and winding way
Once caught a lover's lonely lay.

Here by thy banks an obscure youth
Sat musing many years ago,
Within whose heart was written woe,
Upon whose brow was written truth ;
His tribute was a murmured moan
Heard by himself and God alone.

His love profound, majestic, deep,
Was lost before the common crowd,
Where crudeness bore distinction proud
And Nature's God taught not to weep.
Here Lincoln mused and saw afar
The foregleam of his mystic star.

Faint was that ray amid the night
That arched his soul with gloom,
For yonder stood a newmade tomb,
And in it lay his Angel quiet.
There oft he wandered when the mood
Craved comfort in its solitude.

But when that night of grief was spent
He saw the rosy ray of morn.
A Star of new hope now was born ;
He saw its gradual, slow ascent,
Until from zenith's crowning height,
A Nation caught its lustrous light.

OLD SADDLEBAGS

Old Saddlebag, Old Saddlebag,
My Pard of other days.
O'er prairie field, through wooded hill,
We've wandered on our ways.
We never saw our spirits sag,
Or lost the mystic thrill
That tuned each note of praise.

Old Saddlebag, Old Saddlebag,
We've swum the swollen stream,
Our faithful horse that bore the load,
Long since, lay down to dream.
We never saw him limp or lag,
Or lose the winding road
That nowhere ran, 'twould seem.

Old Saddlebag, Dear Saddlebag,
We've made the circuit round,
And oft beneath each rustic roof,
Gave forth the gospel sound,
Nor did a service ever drag,
Where Spirit lent His proof,
And Christ, as King, was crowned.

But Saddlebag! My Saddlebag!
The eve bespeaks the night,
Your face, age-rusted, tells its tale,
Mine too is grey and white.
But soon from Earth's abysmal crag,
Those mounts of God we'll scale,
And stand on heaven's height.

THE SLAVER'S SOLILOQUY

I have gathered from the violet nothing of its glowing
bloom,
Nothing of its dowered beauty, nothing of its sweet
perfume;
Oft I've plucked a tiny petal, crushed it in my hardened
hand,
Flung its shattered fragments from me on the barren
yellow sand.

I have seen the rose of morning with its mingled red and
green,
With fair heaven's dewdrop on it, nurtured by a hand
unseen,
And at eve when twilight gathered, I, with silent stealthy
tread,
Tore this treasure from the bosom that had nursed its
infant head.

Through the darkness softly stealing with a conscience
counting cost,
To an obscure lonely corner where the love, enjoyed, is
lost,
There I bore my bleeding beauty, soon to see it fall and
fade,
And the thief, who hoped for riches, in one hour be
poorer made.

Thus God's lilies and fair roses are on earth to serve and
bless,
By their beauty and their fragrance, by their love and
gentleness ;
But the wormwood and the canker bring their blight be-
fore the noon
Of sweet Summer with its sunshine can unfold to fullest
bloom.

There was never cloud more cruel cross'd a nation's moral
sky,
With its wanton wings foreboding what shall be its
destiny,
Than when these, our fairest heritage, fall a prey to foul
desire
Where no law is, God or human, save the law of lust on
fire.

Demons from hell's deep, dark center would dare scruple
quite so low
To crush out the crown of nature, deal a nation's fatal
blow,

That would end Creation's glory, carve the letter on her
tomb,
Read by ages fair, immortal, sealing for all time their
doom.

Moral weakness wove her fabric in the fate of Rome and
Greece,
To the gods of evil passion they their daughters held in
lease,
'Til the scroll of God's great justice wrote the golden
letter'd law,
Which became the wormwood worker—a decay they
never saw,

'Til their towered walls and bulwarks, palace courts and
stately men
Lay a heap of rot and rubbish as a witness 'gainst their
sin,
And to Nations for all ages who with wisdom's eye shall
see,
That the edict is eternal which the courts of God decree.

LEAVES ARE FALLING

Slowly earthward leaves are falling,
Watch them go.
They have answered Mother's calling;
On her bosom resting low,
See her lull them to and fro.
Soon the scene will be appalling—
Come the frost and snow.

Leaves of learning how endearing
To the young,
Who have given Age a hearing,
On the bough where hung
Counsel's blessing, Wisdom's tongue.
Greater now appears the clearing
Since the song they sung.

They were shelter, ever shading
Tender blade.
Nor unmindful or evading
Vows in honor made,
Though they be delayed
For a later better grading
Than at first essayed.

Barren trees bring better vision
Than when green.
Counsel clears and then decision
Works her way between
Both the unseen and the seen.
Yonder lies the field Elysium,
And my thoughts serene.

THE UNSEEN PULL

The boy's kite is high in the air,
"But the boy is blind" they say.
Then how does the boy know it's there?
Or what pleasure in such play?
If the kite's on high and I can't see,
What fun is flying to me?

But the boy replied "That he felt the pull,
On the string he held in his hand,
And that his joy was overfull."

O now I understand.
For the "unseen pull" gave a delight,
That could not come through the sense of sight.

Eternal life is God's great Kite,
With streaming string let down.
And on it each dear wish takes flight,
To shape our golden crown.
For we fix by faith our future there,
And mount by the "unseen pull" of prayer.

AT BROTHER'S GRAVE

Tall, ungainly, not one grace,
The sport of every evil eye,
Unwelcome guest at any place,
No tear for him, no sigh.

On a lonely hill side he is laid,
'Neath the silent cedars' shade.

Languid was his mystic look,
And stolid was his brow.
E'en nature's self, it seemed, forsook
His very presence now.

Where the willow chants her lonely song,
He lies in silence all night long.

No tomb is there to mark the spot,
No flower is there to show ;
That weeded mound is half forgot
Where brother lieth low.

The years will soon no record bear
That such a one was buried there.

NEW YEAR

The sun is set but o'er the sky
Her golden glow points East.
We'll watch the midnight tapers die
Around our annual feast,
Then eastward turn a watchful eye,
For New Year's dawn draws nigh.

And with this dawn a higher hope
Than other years have brought,
A vision with a wider scope
By all mankind is sought.
A vision that will vitalize,
The good desire, the bad despise.

THE LITTLE COTTAGE

A little cottage still is standing on the hill,
Long wreaths of spiral ivy deck the door,
Deep folds of festooned garlands loosely fill
The inner latticed arbor from the floor.
No tenant tarries now within those walls,
The thistle's growth is hindered here no more;
At eve dark shadows deepen through its halls,
And grating winds in nightly revel roar.

Sonnets

TO B. R. F.

You early came, too soon you went away ;
Brought much to wake the wish, soul to inspire,
Lift dormant dreams and on thine altar lay
My treasur'd trust, gold girt, all fringed with fire.
There strong desire and feeble hope were wed.
Ill matched as mates yet mute they journey'd far
Down life's steep slope. Each saw his polar star
At zenith's height, sword-like cast radiant ray,
Whose points pierced through the soul ; strong lustre shed
And drove all lesser lights from heaven's sky,
Like beaten troops before their conquerors fly.
There infant morn drank from one crystal fount,
Nor dreamed of cooler stream or greener mead.
Saw towering high, sublime, a rosy crested mount,
While all the world below lay lifeless, cold and dead.

JUDAS

The molding time is past, the clay is hard,
Sin recognized, will not abandoned be ;
Crimes of the scarlet hue are held in slight regard,
While conscience sluggish moves or lies remorselessly.
Cold Wisdom lonely lingers like some bright Western star
That skirts a cloud full heavy with longings to be free ;
My new sin wounds to weakness, my old sin shows its
scar.

The music of the world has lost its harmony.
The breeze of early youth now burns my burden'd brow.
I napt at noon and broke my morning vow,
Stood at the old ship's stern, it should have been the prow,
And watched the wild waves track upon a stormy sea.

DOWN STATE

"Down state," "down state," says that saucy city,
Everything beyond her limit, she regards with pity.
When you mention "Egypt," watch her wink and smile,
Better borrow "Egypt's" blood to purify your pile.
Where go get it? Now you listen, you have lost the germ
Paddling neck deep in pollution, long beyond your term.
Skim the scum from your behavior, skin your city's skunk,
Banish bandits, bold bootlegger—all your moral junk.
Put sharp teeth into your statute—policemen penalize,
Who side step where city cesspools show a gilded guise;
Where contagion's vile head lifted, justice bold defies.
Think you we are ignorant idiots? better "take our size."
Lincoln was a "down state" product, so was John A.
Logan,
We're tired of being "bawled out" loud with your sarcastic
slogan.

SEVEN

Choice children seven: The years swift come and go,
Time was you heard your mother's lullaby
And into dreamland dropt with closed eye,
While she with busy hand and bended back
Turned to her task again. No whistle's blow
Announced the day's work done, no wage to show
A standard scale. Toil groov'd the beaten track,
Tore from the sky ideals to pave old drudgery's road,
While Ease from her soft palace beneath a luxury load,
Thought surfeit moderation and moderation lack.

Eastward eyes my children, Westward now turn mine,
But God's great arching rainbow o'er both our pathways
shine.

The storms' dark clouds receding, flash signal to the
seven,

That sacrifice and service gain passport into heaven.

ALUM HILL

Tread softly here, 'tis hallowed ground.

Grey wisdom glances o'er the years,

And in her horoscope appears

Tall gilded shadows, golden crowned.

Here oft athwart my path was thrown

A shaft of silence. And all unknown,

The mystery lingers long ; sometimes it rears

A distant citadel with wide encircling throne,

Where love, refined, dissolves all carking cares.

If half that happened then would with me now abound,

Gird strong my faith and grasp my feeble hand,

Perhaps I'd quite forget, at least might understand

Why life's young, early stream so soon to coldness
turned,

Made cinders of a hope where holy incense burned.

TO BESS

With rosy cheek and radiant eye,
And soul to match,
Dear me, a dozen boys would vie,
One smile to catch !
Then spend the evening wondering why
You moved apace
To ply such grace,
As fits an angel's face.
From each you would your soul detach,
Yet beckon all come nigh.
Once at your feet five fellows fell,
With suppliant eye and hand.
You smote them with your magic wand,
The rest I dare not tell.

MY SONG

O let me sing my little song,
Then sleep.
Be it brief or weak or strong
Or deep.
Its music all is mine,
And will not keep
In Nature's close confine.

But if one ear can catch the tune,
And pause,
I'll bless the day that brought such boon,
Where laws
With little links are knit
Into a cause
That will experience fit.

SLOP THE HOG

Do you feed the spirit or slop the hog?
Where is your food supply?
Do you suck the scum from the swampy bog,
Or soar in the sunlit sky?
Have you ever wondered or pondered why,
We fatten so fast on the food we eat,
Why the soul grows sick on sour'd meat?
While a spirit fine and a spirit sweet,
Has a manna-menu feast?
Where the spirit feeds, feels strong and spry
And watches the withering beast
Within, writhe in pain, moan and sigh,
Finally droop and dwindle and die?
Old Wisdom still looks on the Banquet board
Sees husks for the hog and corn for the lord.

LED

The sheep of God go on by loving Shepherd led,
Sometimes through meagre mead,
Sometimes o'er rocky hill,
Awhile through green and shady glen,
Rest there awhile by waters still.
Then up again and onward, they know not where or when
The march will halt, but they are always fed.
They know at eventide one ample fold
Will shelter safe from heat or cold.
There prying wolf can never come to kill,
Nor robber climb. The Shepherd's eyes behold
Always, sees the number, knows the needs,
Guards and guides them, clothes and feeds,
While stars are shining overhead.

World War Poems

THE DOVE AND THE VULTURE

The dove of peace, with wondrous wing,
Had soared aloft, like an aeroplane,
Nor little dreamed that 'neath her nest,
Lay a bomb to burst and break her rest.

So upward she soared, borne on high
By the plaudits of peace, from a world's vast cry,
'Til lo, ere she touched the topmost peak,
She heard from below a loud, shrill shriek.

'Twas the scream of the war bird, wild with rage,
As it tore with its talons the huge steel cage,
Where a century's fury, pent up, had broke
Through the surface of silence, when the old bird
awoke.

Ah my dove's pretty pinion, I saw you descend,
As the dart of the demon, with sharp pointed end,
Pierced through those fair feathers, touching the heart
That beat peace for patriot, throughout the world's
mart.

Poor bird ! Thou didst teach me purity was power,
Then what of this wreckage ? This ruin of an hour ?
Shall Religion and Law, Education and Light,
These buoyant forces that fostered your flight,

Become the sad sponsor that weakened thy wing,
And silence the song of peace thou didst sing ?
Oh no ! I have missed it, for why thus assign
The deeds of the demon to Angels divine ?

How dare they who sit on some Pilate's throne
And wash from their hands a crime of their own?
For the arrow that struck at the heart of the dove,
Was never shot forth from the window of love.

But the wing of the dove was wounded by greed—
By avarice, by envy and such kindred deed
As craving of Monarchs and Sovereigns inspire
To meet out the measure of selfish desire.

While the Monarchs of Europe exultantly reign,
And the blood of their brother flows from its vein,
The blood of the dove still cries from the ground,
And the wing that was wounded will heal of the wound.

GERMANY

You had a name to live but that is lost,
For "Made in Germany" was once an honored sign.
But when your nobler nature to the god of war was
tossed,
Naught but the wretched crust of fate was left behind
To feed your famished sons quick to the battle hurled,
Whose better choice was death than by decree imperiled.

Nor can your iron will command your cruel hand
To strike one heavier blow and menace all mankind,
Nor draw yet British blood or desolate the land
Where lovely France once dreamed and to her sons
enshrined
A mighty monument of pride and wealth and power
Which war's wild rage laid low within a single hour.

A score of sister nations are bent on your defeat,
And ready stand her sons to hear their nation's call.
Back to your borders soon we'll watch your swift retreat,
Nor will the battle cease though many sons may fall,
But with a God to guide where right opposes wrong
The cannon's shout shall be the world's sweet vict'ry song.

VOCAL VENTURES

Flag! Patriotism! Neutral rights—High seas!
Monroe doctrine—et cetera. Speak, boy, don't spout.
Who cares for all of these?
Wall Street? Eastern Aristocracies?
Perhaps! Yet somewhat less devout,
With lusty lung their shriek and shout.

Wind, boy. Gush! Hast thou a cat?
Or ship to stake, cargo to cross the zone?
Lean patriots oft grow fat
In vocal ventures. Say, boy, scat!
The tiger of the times is loose, fortunes groan,
Men's meat today may be tomorrow's bone.

Puerile patriots we, our tropic zeal,
Athwart plows Wisdom's row with airy words.
We loud express the little that we feel,
Oft cloak our clay and call it steel.
So much of crude within kind nature hordes,
That we, at best, become like little lords.

OUR SERVICE FLAG

The stars are all blue in our flag tonight,
And they number just thirty four;
And the blue will blend with the red and white,
For the boys in France will stay in the fight,
'Til the world wide war is o'er.

And we trust each star will retain its blue,
And turn not to yellow gold;
For that gold would grieve both me and you,
Though the soldier boy fell fighting true,
With his comrades brave and bold.

But should there come in the turn of the tide,
A flash from across the sea,
Which bears the sad message, "your son has died,"
Let us go down together then side by side,
To the heart of Gethsemane.

And there in the darkness, slope upward our prayer,
To the bosom of God on His throne,
Who soothes the deep sorrow our burdened souls bear,
With a soft touch of mercy that tempers despair,
'Til the soul sees the Saviour alone.

OUR AIM

The Devil destroyed the Dove of Peace, and his demons
are delighted,

But the power of prayer is still in the air, and Christians
are all united—

United I say in the things that count, and their force is
being felt.

'Tis jolt on jolt, like a thunderbolt, that our forces
pound and pelt.

And there is never a crack in the Trumpet's call but its
note is strong and clear,

We shall capture the enemy's citadel and her walls will
disappear.

Be our army strong and our footing firm and our aim nor
low nor high,

But hit the spot of the liquor lot and let the demon die.

A WARLESS WORLD

A warless world when swords are double bent ;
When silent lie the spears with blunted point,
Proclaim disuse ?

No ! halfway the wound is cured. Full content
Must cast the plowshare, pruning hook, anoint
A world's deep wound ; correct, diffuse,
Cement by love the breach that hate hath rent,
And smooth the scar with Christian complement.

The Hague, Genoa—yes, but such small segments these,
Within the world's vast view and circled scope,
 Mere specks do seem:
When universal good's the goal, world destinies
 To seal secure, fulfill the hungry hope,
 Give climax to the dream
Of world dominion, dominate, yet free,
 Pedestaled on Justice and crowned with Liberty.

BE READY, MEN!

Be ready men! the captain said, the danger zone is near.
The sea is smooth, no fog disturbs, the sky is calm and
 clear.

We pray and hope no periscope from out the sea may rise,
But scan the waters far and near and watch with wistful
 eyes,
Nor fail to note our waving flag aloft the April skies.

Be ready men! stand by each gun, the Nation's destiny
May haps be writ within an hour upon the open sea.
The times are tense, our own defense should stiffen every
 nerve
To steady action on the deck where honor must not
 swerve,
Nor yet unseason'd shot be fired before just cause deserve.

Be ready men! and should the sea yield up a submarine,
You have your orders in advance and honor cries, "Come
clean!"

If neutral right has proved our plight and friend becomes
our foe,

Let common justice plead our cause—say who first struck
the blow

That ruffled up the eagle's crest where Peace was wont to
grow.

Be steady men! A century's smile methinks I scent afar,
That downward slopes from heaven's throne upon this
world's dread war,

And through the dark reveals a spark—sweet promise of
the day

Whose golden dawn though distant far throws soft one
glimmer grey

O'er all the world's sad wreck and ruin and woe of
yesterday.

GIVE "TEDDY" A FLAG

Give Teddy a flag and a trip to France,
With a hundred thousand strong.

'Twill temper the steel of the Allies' lance,
Give Spirit to their song

That needs a note from the Eagle's throat,
To help the cause along.

There'll never a star its lustre lose,
Nor a stripe receive one stain.
The British bars and France's bright hues
Will blend with Glory's train,
And triple shot will shell the spot
Throughout Alsace-Lorraine.

Give "Teddy" a flag and watch the boys,
Whom Uncle Sam thought slow,
Show ready spirit, stately poise,
When first the Bugle's blow
Sounds near and far that off to war
With "Teddy" they may go.

NOT THE GERMAN BUT THE GIANT

Kill our enemies? Yes kill them all, but how?
With shot and shell? Cannon, bomb, and sword?
No! these are but the pruning powers applied
To rank excesses, Satanic, hell-supplied,
And fostered by a godless, Hohenzollern horde,
Whose fevered vow
Would fetter in its grip a race,
With universal woe and dread disgrace.

Kill our enemies? Yes, let's do it, do it right,
With lessons human love has learned from God.
The Beast must be made toothless first, then tamed
To court the Dove, let die the demon hate inflamed
And o'er his carcass fall sweet Nature's kindly clod
Where comes no light
Of future resurrection ever more to wake
That blunder most colossal—that German giant mistake.

Religious Poems

THE DAWN

From Eden's centre, where man first sinned,
Where darkness dropped her wing,
God stood and threw a line
Of sixty centuries' length—
Stupendous shadow—through the Earth.
Small tributaries from that stream
Have issued, venom veined,
Through valley, hill and plain,
Until that Richer Stream from side divine
Dries up the other by its flow,
And sixty centuries, by one look,
Obeisance makes to that Great Day
Which ushers in the Dawn.

That day a glimmering glows in yon far East,
Yet down below horizon's rim to all with slumbrous eye,
But not to such as towered sentinels
Who, from their lofty walls on high,
Observe afar thru slanted slope
Its foregleam grey and glorious.

Sweet welcome day ! Who would not bid
Thy double haste ? Who would not note the angel's smile
On that dark deep of yesterday, and see those shadows
Melt away to final dissolution ?
Come day of days, boon most glorious !
So shall these baser elements of self
Begin to melt away until, within Thy sight,
The smallest speck they seem ;
And to each wish a wing Divine
Be given for my flight.

PERSONALITY

God is, I am ; God first then I ;
Nor two in ONE, nor HE in all
Except as part. This I, detached and free,
Alone is Personality,
To feel its way or fall.

"No wandering spark of Deity."
Am I ; nor lost in trackless skies,
Watched by the destinies
Whose timely call
Will bring me back to Thee.

I will ! Alone I said it, true.
Nor need I pause to know
What power spoke, where grew
The idea new
Or old, if it but grow
Some worthy act to woo,
And execute the thought
In Wisdom's realm wrought.
Yet life will not all of Iron show,
There's some of rust we can not rue.

I ought. Yes—Out of self I fly
For the first time.
My brother's claim I now deny
No longer. To help him I must try,
For, otherwise, 'twere crime,
Where wounded mankind lie,
To reason out a cold retreat,
Like Priest or Levite when they meet
An opportunity sublime.
And pass it by.

NO ROOM IN THE INN

No room in the Inn—well whose to blame?
Proprietor, maid, or guest?
O no! such logic is loose and lame;
Reveals a limp and tapers tame.
Why camouflage to beat the game
Or quit the quest?

Mary and Joseph arrived too late
While guests were being fed.
O the golden rule is good and great
For you to practice while I will wait,
So if you fail, the final fate
Will fix the Manger's bed.

Not one or two or three—but all
Make mangers for a King.
Help press the thorn and give the gall
And skyward rear the selfish wall
That shuts from heaven, prayers forestall
While angels sing!

**"THEY COMPEL ONE SIMON TO BEAR
HIS CROSS"**

Three crosses borne up Calvary's slope,
'Twas heavy lumber for a load.
On either side Disdain and Hope
Were crucified with Christ the Lord.
Alike, both Guilt and Innocence,
'Twixt earth and sky hung in suspense.

But why should Simon bear the cross,
Created by the crimes so black,
Of that mad mob? Why force the loss
Upon a neutral stranger's back?

Gross imposition! deed most unjust!
Upon those flinching shoulders thrust.

The mob which shouts out crucify,
Bares not its back, feels not the weight,
Will some disciple? But none is nigh
To share the Savior's shameful fate.

So Simon seized by hands unkind,
Must bend his back if not his mind.

And many a back with burden bent
Since then has trudged up Calvary's way
With woes unnumbered. "Why were they sent?"
We often hear the questioner say.

And through the ages from the sky,
The self same echo answers "why."

THE ASPIRANT

The Aspirant stands on earth with upward look,
Yet downward leans; sees not the pathway's crook,
Nor when nor where the vision crosses;
Counts not tomorrow's gain, today's slight losses,
But ever climbs; now parallel with the vision's track,
Now slightly swerves, anon swings slowly back,
Slopes upward steadily though with divergent feet,
Awhile zigzags his way, sharp jagged corners meet
At every turn, yet onward, upward, heaven lures.

What though the path turn in or out? detours
In devious ways? each backward, erring slip
Finds footing soon, then straight begins the trip
Anew; halfway the hill is climbed, meander's might
Makes slow the journey; but still fair heaven's height
Is nearer come, hope rests on Level's ground
To breathe awhile, then loops the loop with upward bound.
One final leap the goal's possessed,
The Aspirant stands in heaven blessed.
The vision's perpendicular, though crisscross be the trail,
We falter, falling forward, yet falling, never fail.

PRAYER

The lamp is lit before the day,
For the sun is busy farther East;
Now is the soul's best time to pray,
And silence makes a ready feast.

And when the sun her western way
Shall shine on other worlds afar,
I'll not forget again to pray
Beneath the twilight of some star.

While others sleep in early morn,
And slumber in the dark of night,
'Tis then the best of prayer is born,
And quicker speeds its wing in flight.

THE SEVEN LAST SAYINGS OF THE SAVIOR

“Father, forgive them they know not what they do.”
 What! an enemy! and must I, likewise, too?
 My highest ideals shattered, my work upturned!
 Spit on, scoffed at, beaten, scourged and spurned,
 Shall I, with breath expiring, “Forgiveness” say?
 Lips of love can do that any day.
 No enemy robs me of that word within;
 Naught but the vision’s loss; the power of sin.

“Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”
 Did ere such simple prayer win heaven’s prize?
 Poor dying thief! thy soul is saved, thy life is lost.
 So rich thy sudden gain, so small the cost.
 The last, yet likeliest hour of life’s link.
 It should have sooner been—too near the brink.
 So, teaches us, none need despair their doom.
 An only instance though, let none presume.

“Behold thy Son—behold thy mother.”
 Two links of love that weld the world together.
 Behold thy Son; His sorrow, wounded side,
 Behold the sacrifice, a Savior crucified.
 Behold a mother helpless in her plaintive plea,
 To soothe or save the Son of Galilee.
 Let Olive’s brow grow dark; Golgotha’s blood
 Stain every shore; make sacred brotherhood.

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
 Divine abandonment! Prophetic by decree.
 “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him for us all.”
 Divine displeasure found us from the fall.

Four thousand years the wound was open wide,
Until the sacrifice, restored and satisfied.
Atonement is God's Chariot Earthward sent,
In which we climb and mount the steep ascent.

"I thirst!" the Savior said, and gall is given for drink.
'Twas earth's last gift. Now nature seemed to sink,
The sun, her western way, stood o'er Mt. Olive still,
Then, of a sudden, dropt below the sacred hill
Into her nest of night. The evening died,
And heaven's midnight meadow, barren, sighed.
Still thirsts the Savior for a wayward race,
Whose gift is gall, whose gratitude disgrace.

"It is finished!" What is finished, pray?
Why, your redemption, mine, though far away,
God's multitude of millions have never faintly heard,
That "It is finished"—sweet, sacred, hallowed word.
The plan is finished, shall that plan be mine
To build a life upon, most sacred and sublime?
To view the world's vast beauty as but a fading flower,
Then slope the vision upward toward that Eternal power.

"Father, into thy hands do I commend my spirit."
From Thee my spirit came, back will Thine angels bear it.
Love's last sweet star goes out; darkness reigns,
The veil is rent, all nature strangely strains.
In earth below, in heaven above, the crack
Reveals a world's sad discord—universal black.
The centuries' price is paid, the call is clear,
And "Whosoever will" may enter there.

THE SAVIOR AND THE SHEEP

Let the light that is luminous lead you
O'er the brow of the hill to the King.
The sheep in the pasture won't need you,
Go now while the heavens doth sing.
Go now while the vision entreateth,
Nor list to the sheep that bleateth.

O pause not to question what loss
Might come to the sheep while away,
For the losing will be but mere dross
Compared to your loss if you stay.

Go hurry with haste to the manger,
To remain with the sheep—that's the danger.

So the Shepherds sought Christ and returned,
Each one to his flock and his fold.
Not a sheep had suffered, 'twas learned,
From the wolf or hunger or cold.
Don't halt 'tween Christ and the sheep,
Seek one and both you may keep.

GLOAMING

The day is gone, the dark, yet distant, hides.
The twilight zone, aglimmering, lies between—
A little line of light, soft shadows gilt with gray.

My dreamland, why not stay
With me longer? Why slip so soon away?
The fairy saints of fancy, commingling in this stream,
Swift sway each billow'd thought to swelling tides.

My word won not nor did my prayer delay
Thine exit from the gloaming into gloom.
So soon to drop into thy nest of night.
Adieu! sweet leaden eyelids, close them tight.
I'll wean the wish anon, from thee, twilight,
And cool the throbbing thoughts, that restless roam,
On night's quiet couch until the dawn of day.

FOUR FADELESS FLOWERS

"But ye are Chosen—Royal—Holy—Peculiar people." I Peter 2:9

Chosen

A chosen flower, not classed as second, culled,
First choice and fair, cream of God's creation.
Sin rusted soul, my keen-edged senses dulled,
Love rubbed out rust, restored to new relation.

Royal

I'm Royal branded. This birthright was not bought
By me. Not less but greater than old Europe's kind.
Exchange? Not much! These fit me better and ought
Wear well and wash if sin spots dark I find.

Holy

I'm holy, not absolute, but by unfolding laws,
God's grip insures the gain that makes the goal.
My downward pull is puny, where Greater Magnet draws,
The favoring gale unmoors from shallow shoal.

Peculiar

Peculiar Child. Curious? Eccentric? Queer?
O no! "God's own in a most peculiar sense."
That makes the message mine with ring full clear,
And builds around my life divine defense.



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